

Obituary, "Insley, Henry E.," 1894 (published 1895)

(keywords: Henry Earle Insley, Samuel F. B. Morse, George W. Prosch, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography)

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Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1894 "new series" vol. 19 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895): 582. The entry appears in the section, "Obituaries, American."

Insley, Henry E., photographer, born in 1811; died in Nanuet, Rockland County, N. Y., Aug. 6, 1894. When Prof. Samuel F. B. Morse returned to the United States in 1839 after learning the art of making daguerreotypes from Daguerre he went to George W. Prosch, a manufacturer of instruments on Nassau Street, New York city, to secure his aid in making the necessary instruments. Mr. Prosch was a brother-in-law of Mr. Insley, who was then engaged in broom-making on the Bowery. According to Mr. Insley, the first daguerreotype of still life made in the United States was by Prof. Morse and Mr. Prosch, and the first life portrait by the new process was by Prof. Draper. Messrs. Prosch and Insley opened a daguerreotype gallery at Broadway and Liberty Street, in which Prof. Morse is believed to have had an interest, and conducted it for nearly a year, when "cool weather and short days" forced them to close. In 1841 Mr. Insley opened a gallery at Broadway and Cedar Street, where he did a large business for many years. He claimed to have been the first operator to take an instantaneous view of a moving object, which was a man walking along the Bowery. The picture was taken by moving the camera as the man walked. He introduced a combination of mirrors and colored glass by which the eyes of a sitter were protected from the glare of direct sunlight, and discovered a method of giving a pink tint to the cheeks of sitters.

[End of text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

See also the obituary for Insley in *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin* (New York) 25:9 (1 September 1894): 285.¹

A ca. 1839 daguerreotype portrait of Insley—now in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art—is viewable on the museum's web site, *Developing Greatness: The Origins of American Photography, 1839–1885*.² The portrait of Insley is included among several Insley family daguerreotypes in Jane L. Aspinwall, "Henry Earle Insley: Artist and Entrepreneur," *Daguerreian Annual 2007* (Cecil: The Daguerreian Society, 2008):76–87. See also Keith F. Davis and Jane L. Aspinwall, *The Origins of American Photography : from Daguerreotype to Dry-plate, 1839–1885* (Kansas City: Hall Family Foundation, 2007): 12–17; Joan M. Schwartz, "The Enigmatic Henry E. Insley," *History of Photography* 16:1 (Spring 1992): 70–72; Roy Blankenship, "Henry Earle Insley: Pioneer Photographer,"

South of the Mountains: The Historical Society of Rockland County 29:1 (January–March 1985): 16–21.

Insley is also remembered in “A Veteran Photographer,” *Photographic Times and American Photographer* (New York) 25:675 (24 August 1894): 134.³

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8940001_INSLEY-OBIT_ANTH_1894-09-01.pdf
2. <http://www.nelson-atkins.org/art/Exhibitions/DevGreat/CollectionDatabase.cfm?id=51000>
3. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8940004_VET_PHOTO-TIMES_1894-08-24.pdf

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